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ABSTRACT

One of the major developmental tasks of adolescence is establishing a unified self-concept, or identity. Four identity statuses (conceptualized by J. E. Marcia as identity achievement, foreclosure, identity diffused and moratorium) are related to (1) the presence or absence of crisis, and (2) a resulting commitment to goals. To examine the relationship between parental identification, traditionality, and identity status in females, 55 college women participated in identity status interviews and completed the Index of Sex Role Questionnaire and the Parental Identification Protocol. An analysis of the results showed that foreclosure subjects ranked highest on both measures of traditionality, while identity achieved women ranked last. Women in moratorium ranked highest in mother identification, followed by identity achieved, foreclosure, and identity diffusion subjects. There was no relationship between mother identification and traditionality, suggesting that these are separate and distinct concepts. Finally, there was a significant relationship between identity achieved and foreclosure subjects' perceptions of their traditionality, suggesting that identity formation through achievment or foreclosure sharpens self-perceptions. The findings suggest that women who have passed through crises become nontraditional in their orientation to work and family, in contrast to women who have accepted a parental or societally-chosen identity who adopt a traditional orientation. (BL)

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PARENTAL IDENTIFICATION, TRADITIONALITY, AND IDENTITY STATUS IN ADOLESCENT FEMALES

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Introduction

The achievement of a stable identity is arguably the most important psychological task faced by any young man or woman. Without a stable, positive identity, other facets of one's life - working, loving, child-rearing, goal-attainment, and social relationships, to name a few - are impoverished, and general functioning can be seriously impaired. But what is an identity? How is it developed? How can this process be analyzed and understood? These questions, in varying forms, have been addressed by philosophers, theologians, and poets through the ages. In the twentieth century, inquiry into identity development has become the province of psychologists.

The most encompassing model of identity formation is that of Erik Erikson. Rooted in psychoanalytic theory, this model proposes eight "ages of man" (Erikson, 1963)[1], beginning at birth and ending at death in advanced years. At each stage, the individual faces a developmental task; the successful completion of which forms the foundation for the next stage. Inadequate crisis resolution does not cause development to stop, however. Rather, psychological business left undone at one stage will continue to affect functioning and growth through subsequent stages.

In adolescence, one's goal is to establish an identity, here defined as a meaningful, unified self-concept. This does not emerge automatically, as do secondary sexual characteristics. Instead, the individual must work actively on his/her identity formation. Failure to do so opens one to the dangers of identity confusion and role diffusion, with dire implications (according to Erikson) for subsequent functioning. Not only must the adolescent deal with the question "Who am I?", but the related problem of "Where am I going?" must also be addressed. By the beginning of young adulthood, a person should have a reasonably well-developed systems of values, an ideology, and some vocational goals.

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[1] Although Erikson referred elsewhere to his model as "Stages of Man". the 1963 volume of Childhood and Society uses the term "Ages of Man".

In an attempt to operationalize Erikson's theory of identity formation, Marcia (1966), using male subjects, developed a method of classifying individuals according to their identity statuses. The four statuses are conceptualized in terms of the presence or absence of crisis (a decision-making period) and commitment (extent of personal investment) to goals in three areas - occupation, politics, and values. Those persons having the status of identity achievement have experienced a crisis, resolved it successfully, and are pursuing self-chosen goals. Individuals of foreclosure status also have an identity. However, they have not passed through a crisis, and, although goals are being pursued, they are parentally or societally chosen. People classed as identity diffused may or may not have experienced a crisis, and are not pursuing any goals. They live on a sort of ad hoc or day to day basis. The final status, moratorium, includes those individuals who are actually in crisis, who have goals that are present, but vague (Marcia, 1980).

Both Erikson and Marcia acknowledge that their models do not account adequately for the development of identity in females. In his chapter on "Womanhood and the Inner Space", Erikson (1968) discussed the unique interaction between a woman's reproductive organs and her role in society. Erikson asserted that a woman is a person only in relation to a man, while a man's identity is his alone. The stages of identity and intimacy are confounded for women, and according to Erikson, it is unclear whether a woman can achieve an identity before marriage. Finally, " . . . womanhood arrives when attractiveness and experience have succeeded in selecting what is to be admitted to the welcome of the inner space 'for keeps' " (p. 283). While historically understandable, this interpretation of women's adulthood is becoming increasingly inadequate, in light of present social reality.

In an effort to extend the identity statuses to females, Marcia and Friedman (1970) added two new factors to the previous criteria for identity achievement.

These new criteria were "sex role attitudes" and "attitudes toward premarital intercourse". So, in addition to exhibiting crisis and commitment in the three area (occupation, politics, and values) validated on males, women had to show evidence of a moratorium and resolution regarding gender roles and sex before marriage. The salience of sexual activity for women's identity was subsequently validated empirically by Schenkel and Marcia (1972). In contrast, Matteson (1977), using a Danish sample, found that crises around sexual issues are important for males as well as females, and thus ought to be made a regular part of Marcia's interview for both sexes. In this connection also, Hopkins (1982) suggested that males, as well as females, could be better classified through tapping both domains.

Morgan and Farber (1982) called for a re-examination of Erikson's developmental sequence for women. Now that women are able to choose between traditional and nontraditional life-styles, there is little or no defense for asserting, as Erikson has, that female identity is dependent upon union with a man. Nor can women automatically follow the same industry-identity-intimacy pattern typical of males. Today's women, at least in the American middle class, are exposed to two values structures - the traditional one in which identity comes through marriage and motherhood, and the nontraditional one in which identity is defined in terms of choice and occupation. They must resolve the conflict between their early upbringing and the new social norms. Successful resolution of this conflict after a moratorium leads to identity achievement, while acceptance without conflict or crisis without resolution leads to foreclosure or diffusion. The maternal identification of a young girl, then, may be limiting if the daughter seeks a life significantly different from that of her mother.

This discontinuity between traditional ideals of womanhood and the reality of occupational choice for today's young females is the source of considerable intrapersonal conflict. In her work on achievement avoidance among college

women, Horner (1972) argued that fear of success is aroused in females by the expectancy that success in achievement-related situations will be followed by negative interpersonal consequences. This state of avoidance has serious implications for the individual's functioning, as well as for the society at large. More specifically, Russo (1979) pointed to the "motherhood mandate" as the origin of women's uneasiness regarding achievement. "Incompatibility with other roles is thus built into society's definition of good motherhood. No matter how well a woman manages multiple roles (e.g. mother and worker) she is in violation of the motherhood mandate and may face personal feelings of guilt and ostracism by family members, peers, and others" (p. 8). Carol Gilligan (1977) reasoned that the issue of female identity, as viewed by psychological theory, may be less a problem of the women themselves than with the Eriksonian framework upon which most recent research is based. In Gilligan's view, the flaw in the model, as it relates to the integration of identity and intimacy, is that all previous stages, except trust, move toward greater independence rather than toward adult connectedness. If Erikson had somehow acknowledged the development in childhood of responsible care leading to intimacy, he would not have had to deal separately with women.

Review of Empirical Studies

The empirical evidence concerning adolescent females' identity formation is rather sparse, and seems to fall into three broad catagories. First is descriptive research, which seeks to define the identity statuses in terms of female development. Next are the exploratory investigations, that identify sex differences in self-concept and related areas. Third are the practical studies of young women and vocational/career issues. Each of these three categories is here reviewed separately.

Identity Statuses

Marcia and Friedman (1970) studied the characteristics of college women from the four identity statuses. They found that foreclosure subjects had the highest self-esteem and the lowest anxiety of the four groups. Women of identity achieved status, although they had more difficult college majors than the other groups, ranked third in self-esteem, ahead of only the diffusion subjects. The authors concluded that the low self-esteem of achievements may be due to a necessary break with cultural norms, causing alienation from peers. By the same token, identity foreclosure was inferred to be an adaptive status for women.

Changing the identity interview to include the premarital intercourse dimension (Schenkel and Marcia, 1972) had noticable effects on the characteristics of the four statuses, with achievement subjects rating highest in self-esteem and lowest in anxiety. Measuring field-independence among the four statuses, Schenkel (1975) found that identity achievers were the most field-independent, followed by foreclosures. Schenkel's conclusion was that for women, foreclosure is a viable alternative to achievement, with no impairment to functioning. In an investigation of self-descriptions of married women, Miller (reported in Marcia, 1980) drew revealing profiles of the four groups. Women of identity achievement status saw themselves as having previously had a "vicarious" identity, but had now adopted, lived through and partially rejected traditional forms. They may have rearranged their family life to meet their new needs. In their own view, they were assertive and competent. Moratorium women were ambivalent about their wife-mother role. Although they wanted to "be themselves", they felt guilty, defiant, and afraid, and sought approval. Women who were identity diffused had doubts about their adult femininity. They described their mothers as poor role models, their fathers as idealized, and their mates as inadequate. Identity foreclosed women were nurturing, loving, and devoted. They saw themselves as securely tied to their families, but not

competent outside the home. Lutes (1981) also found a significant relationship between early marriage and identity foreclosure, high social desirability, and low impulsivity.

Sex in Self-Concept

Several authors have studied sex differences in self-esteem. The most consistent finding has been that males have higher levels of self-esteem than do females, especially in the adolescent years and beyond. In an early work, Constantinople (1969) found that college life reduced identity diffusion only in males, and suggested that the academic experience is less growth-enhancing for women. A series of studies by Broverman, et al (1972) yielded several interesting results about perceptions of the sexes. These authors found that a consensus about sex differences existed and that sex role definitions were uncritically accepted and incorporated into self concepts of men and women. Moreover, characteristics ascribed to males were more positively valued by both sexes than those ascribed to females. Daughters of working mothers, though, perceived women as more competent than did daughters of homemakers.

Bohan (1973) reported age as well as sex differences in self-concept, with tenth grade girls having the lowest self-concept of all groups studied. Bohan's interpretation was that these young adolescent girls had begun to recognize the relative inferiority of their sex role, with lowered self-concept as the consequence. Comparing a 1968 sample of adolescents with a 1975 sample, Bush, et al (1977) found that girls in the later cohort still had lower self-esteem than boys, and still valued their own sex role less highly than did boys. Results from a similiar investigation (Hanes, et al, 1979) showed that both males and females in grades seven to twelve attributed higher self-esteem to males, indicating that sex role stereotypes have a negative effect on girls' perceptions of self in relation to males. Using a college-age sample, Erdwins, et al (1980) reported that those subjects having

the highest self-esteem were male and rated themselves as either masculine or androgynous on the Bem Sex Role Inventory, while low self-esteem was related to undifferentiation, femininity, and female sex.

Identity and Vocational Choice

Because identity in our culture is closely bound up with one's vocation, a few authors have sought to explore the relationship between the career orientations of females and their adult roles. In a position paper, Patterson (1973) wrote that a major problem with counseling high school girls for careers lies in female socialization for non-vocational achievement. Two aspects of a girl's identity are contradictory, according to Patterson: the acceptance of her sex role and the acceptance of her assets and liabilities in a work-world sense. As a remedy, he advocated a "kindergarten to college" vocational development program for females. One factor affecting women's competence in a male-dominated occupational sphere may be that women are less likely to think of their work in terms of competition, as do males, but rather as a way of maximizing their personal potential (Josselson, 1973). A few more empirical studies have been undertaken in recent years. Smart (1980) used a multiple regression analysis to identify factors related to career and family commitment among twelfth grade girls. She found that family commitment was inversely related to feminist ideology, and that family and career commitment had a low negative correlation. Interestingly, there was no relationship between family and career commitment among girls with nontraditional mothers. A similiar result was reported by Gilroy, et al (1981) who found that daughters of working mothers were more androgynous and had less fear of success than daughters of non-working mothers. In an investigation of the relationship between identity statuses and vocational identity (Grotevant and Thorbecke, 1982), high school males and females were roughly equal in vocational identity formation, but there were sex differences in how vocational identity was achieved. For males, it was related to an

instrumental orientation, acceptance of challenging tasks, and lack of concern about others' negative evaluations. For females, the salient factors were a hard-work orientation and avoidance of competition. This result apparently confirms Josselson's (1973) earlier suggestions.

The following may be concluded from the foregoing review: 1) identity achievement has different implications for females than for males; 2) a cultural preference for male attributes has strong implications for girls' self-concepts, and thus for their identity formation; and 3) girls and women view career issues in a less competitive, more interpersonal way than do males.

Problem Statement

This study examines the relationship among Parental Identification, Traditionality, and Identity Status in adolescent females. More specifically, two hypotheses were tested in the present study: 1) women of identity foreclosure status will be highest in traditionality, followed by identity achieved subjects, and finally, by those in moratorium; and 2) foreclosure women will have the strongest maternal identification, achieved women will rank second, and moratorium subjects third. No predictions were made about subjects classed as identity diffused, due to the pathologies inherent in that status.

Method

Sample

Sixty college women (ages 18-21) were recruited from undergraduate psychology classes to participate in the investigation. The final sample consisted of 55 subjects, whose ethnic and geographic backgrounds were representative of the student population at this large, public university situated in the Southwest.

Instruments

Three instruments were used. To determine subjects' identity statuses, the interview developed by Marcia and Friedman (1970), which includes questions about

sex role and premarital intercourse was administered to all participants. Traditionality was measured according to the Index of Sex Role Orientation (Dryer, et al, 1981), a 19-item questionnaire originally developed as a measure of feminism. Parallel research indicated low discrimination on three items (Vaughn-Roberson, et al, 1984), which were dropped from the analysis. An additional item was added to the questionnaire, asking subjects to rate their own level of traditionality. Finally, identification with parents was determined by the Parental Identification Protocol (PIP), an open-ended 20-item instrument based on the "Kelly Role Rep Test" (Kelly, 1955). Subjects were asked to generate twenty "constructs", or ways in which two of three individuals (mother, self, father) are alike and one is different. Three scores were derived: Mother ID, Father ID, and Alienation, based upon the number of times the subject aligned herself with either her mother or her father.

Procedure

Identity status interviews were conducted individually with each subject, and scored according to criteria established by Marcia and Friedman (1970) and Grotevant and Cooper (1981). Interviewers were two female graduate students. Immediately following the interview, each subject was asked to complete the ISRO and PIP. The entire procedure took between 40 minutes and an hour.

Analysis

A series of one-way ANOVA's was performed on the three identification measures and the two traditionality measures, using subjects from all four identity statuses. In order to minimize the discrepancy among cell sizes, reduced numbers of Achieved and Foreclosed subjects were included in these analyses.

Correlations were derived among the identification and traditionality variables, using the full (N=55) sample.

Results

The first hypothesis—that foreclosed women would rank highest in traditionality, followed by achieved subjects, and finally, by those in moratorium—received some support, although the results did not reach statistical significance ($F(3,25) = 2.59$, $p=.07$). Subjects classed as foreclosed did indeed rank highest on both measures of traditionality, but it was the identity achieved women, rather than those in moratorium, who ranked last. Descriptive statistics for the four statuses may be found in Table 1, and F-ratios in Table 2.

The second hypothesis was not supported, although a statistically significant result - different from the one predicted - was found. It was hypothesized that maternal identification (Mother ID) would be highest in foreclosed subjects, followed by women of identity achievement status, then by moratorium subjects. Analysis of Variance yielded on overall significant F-ratio ($F(3,25) = 3.16$, $p = .04$), but it was women in moratorium who ranked highest in Mother ID, followed by identity achieved subjects, then by foreclosures, then by diffusions. See Tables 1 and 2 for descriptive statistics and F-ratios, respectively.

No relationship was found between Mother ID and Traditionality, using the full sample ($N=55$) in a correlational analysis ($r=.01$, NS), nor was a relationship found when the analysis was performed by identity status groups. These results strongly suggest that maternal identification and traditionality are separate and distinct concepts. A high positive correlation ($r=.48$, $p=.0002$) was found between traditionality as measured by the IRSO and subjects' self-rating of their traditionality when scores from all groups were pooled. When analyzed by status, however, this relationship was significant only for identity achieved ($r=.47$, $p=.01$) and foreclosed subjects ($r=.54$, $p=.03$). Apparently, then, the formation of an identity—either through achievement or foreclosure—sharpens young women's self-

perceptions, at least regarding their own traditionality. See Table 3 for correlations.

Although no other statistically significant results were found in the present analyses, some interesting trends in the data emerged. On the Father ID variable, analyzed for exploratory purposes, the foreclosed women ranked highest, followed by moratoriums, achievements, and diffusions. The other exploratory variable, Alienation, is intended to be a measure of an individual's lack of identification with parents. In this sample, the diffused subjects ranked highest, with foreclosures a surprising second, followed by achievements and moratoriums. Graphic representation of the rankings of the statuses on all five variables may be found in Figure 1.

Discussion

This study has answered a few questions while raising several more to be addressed in future research. The finding that is the most consistent with expectations is the difference between foreclosed and achieved subjects on the Traditionality measure. It appears that, whatever else they may have in common, women who have passed through crises in pursuit of identity have become nontraditional in their orientation to work and family. In contrast, women who have accepted a parentally or societally-chosen identity have also adopted a traditional orientation toward the female role.

The profile of identity diffused subjects, about whom no predictions were made, also seem consistent with Erikson's and Marcia's theories. These women are relatively low on all five measures except Alienation, where they scored far higher than any other group. Since this status is defined in terms of the absence of crisis and commitment, it is not surprising to find such low scores on the dependent variables.

The moratorium subjects emerged looking strangely like what was expected of the foreclosures. The high mother ID and low Alienation scores found in this group,

along with the fairly high traditionality scores were unanticipated. Due to the extremely low number of subjects classed as moratoriums, no interpretation of these findings is offered here: it is hoped that subsequent investigations will lead to a clearer profile of this group.

One of the most useful findings is the lack of relationship between Mother ID and Traditionality in identity achieved subjects. Clearly, a young woman does not have to sacrifice her early identification with her mother in order to achieve an identity of her own--especially a non-traditional identity. It may also be speculated that a strong maternal identification actually facilitates identity achievement, perhaps by providing a firm foundation to build on.

Future research into women's identity development should consider the traditional vs. non-traditional orientation of the subjects' parents, in order to get a clearer picture of family identification patterns and their relationship to women's identity status. In addition, investigations are needed into the relative importance of the component of identity in determining overall status, as well as the salience of each component to young women.

Reduced Sample:	Achieved N=9	Foreclosed N=9	Moratorium N=4	Diffused N=7
	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	$\bar{X}$ (SD)
Mother ID	41.11 (13.64)	35.11 (6.41)	46.25 (11.81)	25.29 (16.48)
Father ID	36.00 (18.17)	38.00 (21.75)	36.25 (11.81)	31.86 (11.84)
Alienation	22.89 (17.43)	25.78 (20.52)	17.5 (20.21)	42.71 (19.33)
Traditionality (IRSO)	31.67 (5.83)	41.33 (10.93)	36.00 (4.97)	34.00 (5.0)
Traditionality (Self-report)	2.56 (.73)	3.56 (1.24)	3.25 (.96)	2.86 (.90)

Full Sample:	Achieved N=28	Foreclosed N=16	Moratorium N=4	Diffused N=7
	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	$\bar{X}$ (SD)	$\bar{X}$ (SD)
Mother ID	46.04 (16.2)	38.69 (12.82)	46.25 (11.81)	25.29 (16.48)
Father ID	32.57 (16.32)	40.81 (22.58)	36.25 (11.81)	31.86 (11.84)
Alienation	21.34 (17.08)	20.5 (19.09)	17.5 (20.21)	42.71 (19.33)
Traditionality (IRSO)	34.36 (7.98)	39.06 (11.43)	36.00 (4.97)	34.00 (5.0)
Traditionality (Self-report)	3.0 (1.05)	3.38 (1.2)	3.25 (.96)	2.86 (.90)

Table 1

Traditionality (ISRO)

Source	df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Identity Status	3	452.14	2.59	.07
Error	25	1452.00		
Total	28	1904.14		

Mother ID

Source	df	Sum of Squares	F	p
Identity Status	3	1465.49	3.16	.04
Error	25	3865.96		
Total	28	5331.45		

Table 2

Mother ID and Traditionality (ISRO)

	r	p
Overall	.01	.95
Achieved	.01	.96
Foreclosed	.09	.74
Moratorium	.51	.49
Diffused	-.26	.58

Traditionality (ISRO) and Self-Rating

	r	p
Overall	.48	.0002
Achieved	.45	.01
Foreclosed	.54	.03
Moratorium	-.07	.93
Diffused	.22	.63

Table 3

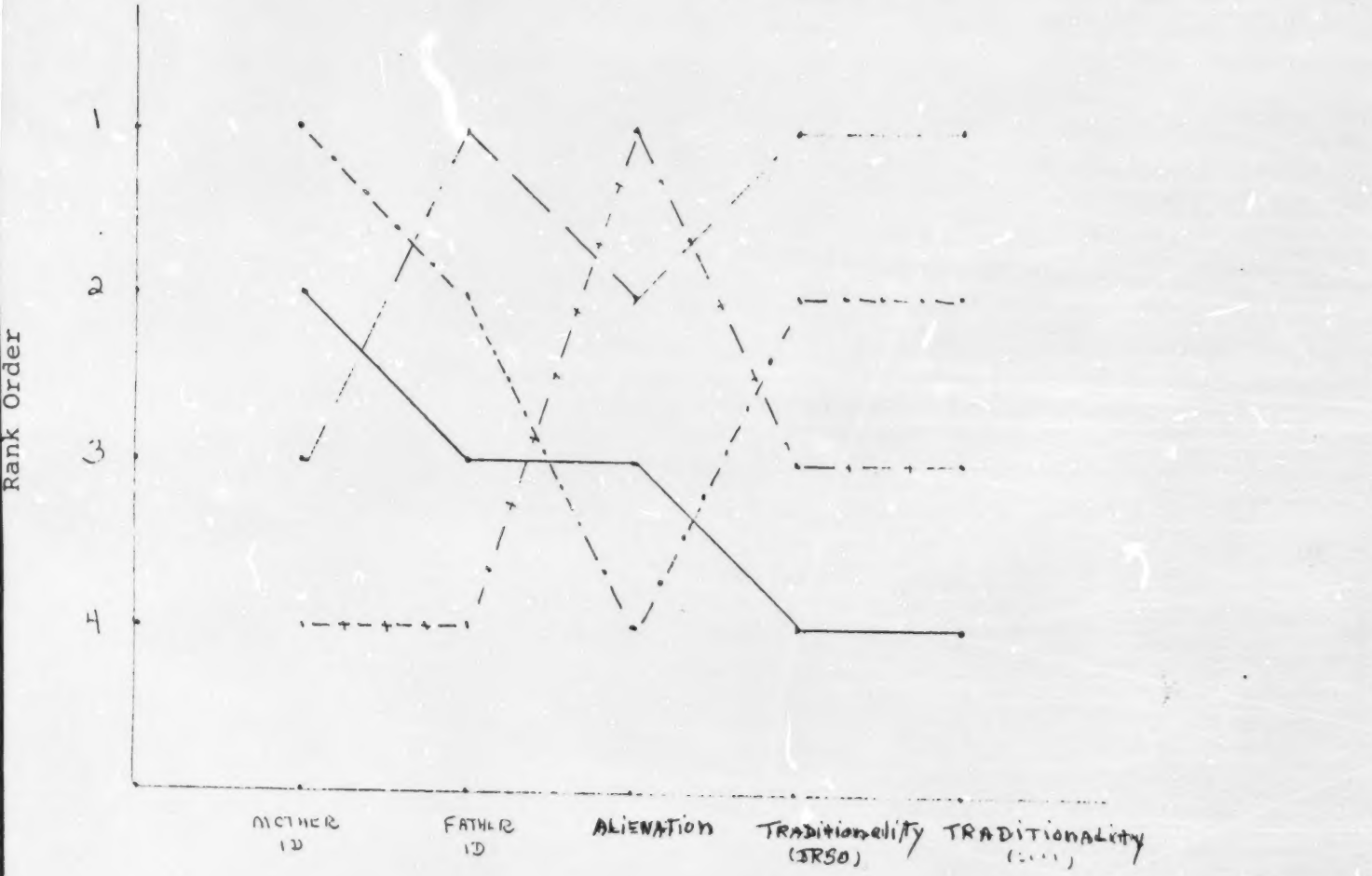
Rank Order
1
2
3
4
MOTHER ID
FATHER ID
ALIENATION
TRADITIONALITY (IRSO)
TRADITIONALITY (...)
Achieved
Foreclosed
Moratorium
Diffused

FIGURE 1

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